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DEPARTMENT FOR EMILY SIEDLAK, EUR/WE
OSD FOR COL PATRICK MCCLELLAND

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SUBJECT: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION'S JULY 2, 2008, MEETING
WITH MOD SECRETARY GENERAL FOR POLICY LUIS CUESTA

REF: A. MADRID 685

[1](#)B. MADRID 578

[1](#)C. 2007 MADRID 1910

[1](#)D. MADRID 142

[1](#)E. MADRID 738

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Hugo Llorens, for reasons 1.4(b)
and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Spanish Secretary General for Defense Policy Luis Cuesta told the DCM on July 2 that U.S.-Spain defense talks in Annapolis and Washington the week of June 21 had been excellent, well organized, and uncontentious. Cuesta and the DCM discussed areas for follow-up from the High-Level Defense Committee (HLDC) Cuesta had attended, as well as the latter's subsequent meeting with U.S. Under Secretary for Defense Policy Eric Edelman. In that context SEGENPOL Cuesta and the DCM discussed Afghanistan, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), the sale of Tomahawk missiles, and Spanish views of the KC-45 aerial refueling aircraft contract under review by the U.S. Air Force. The meeting was extremely cordial, and characterized by the personal rapport developed with SEGENPOL during the DCM's nearly two years in Madrid. Despite the valedictory good feelings, the discussions flagged a number of issues to pursue with the Spanish, including, in the near term, our outstanding request for Spanish police trainers in Afghanistan and, looking further ahead, potential revisions to the U.S.-Spain Agreement on Defense Cooperation (ADC) which is in effect until 2011. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) In offering the DCM his impressions of the 2008 HLDC in Annapolis, SEGENPOL Cuesta confirmed there were no contentious issues and the meetings had been substantively satisfactory for both sides. He informed the DCM he planned to form a working group within the Ministry of Defense to consider the Agreement of Defense Cooperation (ADC) between the United States and Spain. Though the arrangement was working well, Cuesta said the group would consider potential "amendments." He mentioned the juridical difference in the handling of the ADC by each government (Spain manages it as a treaty) as an area to prepare in 2010 in order to be ready for 2011. Reiterating Spain was largely satisfied with the agreement, Cuesta nonetheless mentioned Spanish sensitivities about Gibraltar and what he perceived as the USG's lack of understanding ("desconocimiento") thereof. Cuesta told the DCM that DASD Dan Fata had offered to discuss Gibraltar with COMNAVEUR Admiral Fitzgerald the increase in visits by U.S. ships to Gibraltar. Acknowledging that such visits were few in absolute terms (only eight so far in 2008) and in

proportion to Spanish port visits (seven percent versus 93 percent), Cuesta said he understood the United States would reduce to the minimum number possible its warships' visits to Gibraltar while retaining Gibraltar as an option of operational reasons. Turning briefly to Kosovo, Cuesta reiterated Spain's non-participation in new missions (EULEX), due to the "complicated status" of Kosovo. He noted the situation was fluid. The DCM expressed U.S. appreciation for Spain's commitment to KFOR and said the United States respected Spain's political position. However, the DCM stressed the importance of the recent enactment of Kosovo's constitution and the need to support the people of Kosovo as they moved forward as an independent nation and free people. The DCM acknowledged the differences in our approaches to recognition but stressed the need to strengthen Kosovo and said he trusted that Spain's engagement stopped short of lobbying against recognition. Cuesta affirmed Spanish support for a moderate Serbian government.

//AFGHANISTAN//

13. (C) Cuesta assured the DCM that the Memorandum of Understanding to formalize Spain's offer to sponsor an Afghan National Army unit (refs C and D) was "practically ready for signature" but might require some legal modifications to make it a treaty between Spain and Afghanistan. (Note: Under this agreement, Spain will construct a forward operating base in Badghis Province, to be occupied by the end of 2009. End note.) Regarding Colombian interest in participating in Afghanistan, Cuesta said the Spanish were willing to serve as facilitators and sponsors within NATO and to help finance the deployment. He recognized it was a sovereign decision and

said the Colombian military would go if and where it wanted. Cuesta reiterated his interest in the concept of civilian-military planning cells raised by DASD Fata during the HLDC and requested terms of reference for further consideration. Visibly discomfited, Cuesta asked the DCM's assistance in putting to rest further inquiries into alleged Spanish wrongdoing in the July 2007 medevac of a U.S. soldier from Bala Baluk District. (Note: General Norton Schwartz, Commander, U.S. TRANSCOM informed Ambassador Aguirre in a letter dated May 19, "Our review of available medical information and the events surrounding the evacuation do not indicate the care received prior to arrival at Bagram or any delay in evacuation were responsible for the amputation." The Ambassador wrote the CHOD to convey the contents of GEN Schwartz's letter, and we have shared a copy of the Ambassador's letter with Cuesta. GEN Schwartz's conclusions track with those provided previously to the Ambassador in a letter from the CHOD, which was provided to EUR in April.)

14. (C) Cuesta indicated the subject of police training had been raised by U/S Edelman. He told the DCM Spain already had 12 Civil Guards attached to the related EU mission and, because Spain was working through the EU, it would be difficult to coordinate separate bilateral Spanish-Afghan assistance. The proposal would have to be studied (further).

The DCM urged Cuesta to proceed with a formal inter-agency vetting of the outstanding U.S. request for Spanish National Police or Guardia Civil members. He stressed the need for Spain to do something definitive, and he suggested Spain could send 30 to 40 police, or more. Such training was an important part of a security strategy for Afghanistan that would also be in Spain's interest. Cuesta noted the EU had decided to double its participation through EUPOL and said perhaps Spain could contribute additional expertise in that context. When pressed by the DCM, he reluctantly offered to talk to his counterpart in the Interior Ministry, Secretary of State for Security Antonio Camacho. He noted, however, that Camacho was focused on combating internal terrorism. The DCM stressed that in discussions with senior Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials, including Camacho, the attitude had been positive about providing trainers for the Afghan police.

//AFRICOM//

15. (C) Regarding potential Spanish involvement with the U.S. Africa Command, SEGENPOL noted Spain and the United States had a common interest in Africa's welfare. The DCM assured Cuesta the United States wanted Spanish input into AFRICOM's mission because we recognize that Spain has a major stake in the continent. Cuesta welcomed the idea of an increased focus on low-intensity conflicts, responses to natural disasters, and efforts to fight asymmetrical threats such as narcotics trafficking and illegal immigration. Whatever contributes to Africa, he noted, helps Spain, too. Nonetheless, the idea of a Spanish headquarters for AFRICOM was "very ambitious." He reiterated the need to present Spain with a formal proposal, and he remained positively disposed to sending a Spanish liaison to Stuttgart in the meantime to improve coordination (ref A). Cuesta further suggested that AFRICOM's State Department Deputy Commander, Ambassador Yates, might also coordinate with the EU's Javier Solana in order to exchange information and seek synergies.

//MINISTER CHACON BEFORE PARLIAMENTARY DEFENSE COMMISSION//

16. (C) Cuesta noted Minister Carme Chacon's desire to meet with Secretary Gates at the first opportunity, perhaps in September or October (reftels). The DCM agreed to follow-up. The DCM asked Cuesta about the new Defense Minister's June 30 congressional testimony and statements regarding Spain's cap of 3,000 on overseas deployments. During her four-hour appearance, Chacon was quoted by the media as saying the GOS "could review some of the limitations it has established, because they are obsolete and unnecessary." Cuesta confirmed the Minister's "willingness to eliminate or change" the ceiling, but noted it was a decision the Minister would have to discuss with the President. The Organic Defense Law establishes the limits and allows for their review, but only President Zapatero could choose to do so. Regarding imminent changes in military leadership alluded to June 30 and the subject of subsequent press speculation, Cuesta said the

Minister would review the service chiefs (referred to in Spanish as the "cupula") "in the normal way." In any event, Cuesta stressed all the service chiefs had done a great job for Spain and for the Spanish Armed Forces and, if relieved of their duties, could go happily to their homes. Cuesta was quick to say not necessarily all four would change. (Note: The Minister of Defense has the power to name the chiefs of each branch of the Spanish Armed Forces, while the President selects the Chief of Defense. General Sanz has been in the latter position for an unprecedented four years. End note.)

17. (C) Referring to the legacy of Spanish Chief of Naval Operations Admiral General Sebastian Zaragoza, the DCM mentioned the sale approved by the U.S. Congress of Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAM) to Spain. Stating only the United States and the UK had this capacity, the DCM noted just having permission to buy TLAM was important. The Bush Administration had been faithful to then-SECDEF Rumsfeld's commitment dating to 2002. The Administration's commitment signaled the importance the United States placed on the military alliance with Spain. The DCM said he hoped the agreement would be sealed soon, especially in consideration of Spanish budget limitations. Cuesta agreed the budgetary scenario was more restrictive than it had been previously, but noted acquisitions were not his area. The division of labor did not prevent SEGENPOL from mentioning in closing the USAF aerial refueling tanker contract awarded to Northrop Grumman, who has partnered with EADS, and is currently under review by the U.S. Air Force. Cuesta understood U/S Edelman to have said he hoped the Air Force could reach a solution that did not require a congressional ruling, for European interests. The DCM clarified the United States wanted the best aircraft available and he lauded the prospect of open competition.

18. COMMENT: The DCM strongly recommended that SEGENPOL Cuesta maintain contact with the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy throughout the post-electoral transition period. While noting that the current set of interlocutors enjoyed a special personal "feeling" (the actual English word the

Spanish use to describe this rapport), both Cuesta and the DCM were optimistic about the future of the defense relationship. As Minister Chacon returns from maternity leave and makes the changes alluded to in the military leadership, we will seek opportunities to further cement these ties. The next weeks and months will be critical, however, for pinning down Spanish commitments, including their intention to move forward with Tomahawk and the beginning of the contracting process for the Afghan National Army base -- and using whatever window of opportunity our own transitions present to encourage the Spanish to commit police trainers and do more generally in Afghanistan. The promised review of the cap on overseas deployments may give the more outward-looking elements within the MOD just the breathing room they need to increase their presence -- and with it, their credibility and stature within NATO and the EU.

LLORENS